

2-OkieOrals

Francis Parkinson: 6-19-2003

Wanted to be a Quartermaster. His dad was a Quartermaster. Closest he got was to perform Messenger watches on the bridge.

When he was in the Fire Control Division his battle station was the mainmast. He went down to the B-Division (Boilers) and stayed there the rest of the time. Stayed in 7 years, then went into the reserves for 3 years. Then went to Camp Pendleton for 27 years. They wanted him to extend after Pearl Harbor but he said no. He didn't want to fight in the war.

Joined the Navy in May, 1939. Training station had a model of the Oklahoma. Did his boot camp in San Diego. Took Simeron from San Diego to Long Beach. Boarded Okie at Long Beach. Battle station was no. 6 Boiler Room. Went attack started he was down in the living quarters bitching. I'd been ashore the night before. He had a friend he'd gone to school with in Fallbrook who was on the Arizona and had a brother on the Okie. They went on liberty together on the 6th. They had gone to the battle of the bands that night at Bloch center. Sunday they would hold a Field Day for the admiral's inspection on Monday. Sweep, clean, dust and start over. Sunday was going to be a work day. You never had a two day liberty unless you had a family, were a officer, or maybe a Chief.

Anderson and Bode left Saturday afternoon to go on liberty. Bob West told him this. Later Parky said they left the morning of the 7th. Bode was on the Blackhawk, an Asiatic ship. Bode was on the Blackhawk prior to coming to the Okie.

Kenworthy on the Macon. Parky thought Kenworthy was a decent guy.

Bode would walk around the boat deck (the bull ring)(place where they would sit and bullshit). Bull ring is right by the stack. Bode would walk around listening to people talk. Master of Arms would then write the guys up. Parky said he was crazy. Said he was triple Asiatic. Parky said later that he left on Saturday. Kenum was Master at Arms—a policeman, a jerk.

Parky had not heard about the sailor killed on December 6th. Okie sailors were wondering why the other ships didn't go out when BatDivOne came in on Friday. The blisters were only opened maybe once a year. They could not have opened blisters on Sunday because there were too many of them.

Francis Parkinson (and Grandprix) went down toward his battle station but only got as far as boiler control. That's where the duty officer would be. He couldn't get in the boiler room because it was flooding. Boiler gang and pump room gang were congregated in boiler control. They couldn't get the hatch dogged down from below. Warrant Officer Goggins told Grandprix and Parky and two others to get up above to dog down the hatch. Goggins said don't worry, they'll counterflood the blisters. They won't sink they would settle to the bottom. So now they were above. When the order came to abandon ship they couldn't undog the hatch. Parky said the armor deck, deck above the engineering spaces, was 14 inches thick. Went to the living quarters but couldn't get to the door to get access to the boat deck. He couldn't reach the door combing. The ladder had broken loose and was swaying. He was trying to get to the door when some officer came up behind him and pushed him up to where he could get to the door. Officer slipped back down. He walked over the side of the ship as she rolled. Walked right along the side, past the roll bar, to the bottom. He was standing on the bottom when planes began strafing. Some sailors were killed by the strafing. Art Grandprix was killed by strafing too.

They said it would take eight or nine guys to raise the hatch from above, four guys just to close it. Spring-loaded. Paul thought the armor deck extended from behind turret 2 to the rear of the ship. They thought the armor deck protected the engineering spaces. Parky's brother was an electrician's striker. Got stuck in engineer's washroom with a group. The washroom had larger than standard portholes, 14-15." Chief watertender Day and Schmidt were in the same washroom and were pushing the men out. Day was a typical chief, had a paunch. Chaplain Schmidt was thinner and could have made it. Charlie West said Schmidt pushed 10 to 12 men out. He definitely pushed Parky's brother out. Parky thought his brother had died. His brother ended up on the Jarvis. Parky thought maybe the Jarvis's boat picked him up. Whatever ship's boat picked the survivor's up, that's the ship they ended up on.

Parky was later on the Iowa. Told to report to the captain on the bridge. Captain told him to come with him to the nav bridge. They were fueling at the time. Captain said someone wanted to talk to him. They handed him the JV phones. Captain said to look at ship alongside (the new Neosho). Parky didn't know his dad had gone back into the Navy. His dad had the skipper promise him that if they were ever in port together, his dad would send a boat for him, and would keep a boat in the water at all times, he promised he would get Parky back aboard if they had to leave.

Parky had another brother on the West Virginia.

Parky swam to the Maryland. Bomb was dropped on the paint locker. Parky just jumped off the starboard side. Went to the airstrip to recover bodies to take them to the morgue. Morgue was set up on Ford Island. Carried them out on stretchers for some time. Spent two weeks at Lululei. Walked guard duty around the ammunition. Lululei is not at West Loch. It is away from Pearl.

Later saved sister Germain, Schmidt's sister, for the fact that her brother saved Parky's brother's life.

They took their cameras away before the war, summer or late spring of 1941. Also took their civies away.